

July 8, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: GN Docket 11-65

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

As a person who is hard-of-hearing, I appreciate the fact that new technologies have changed the lives of many disabled citizens by giving them access to opportunities previously denied to them.

Access to high-speed Internet service ("broadband") allows people with disabilities to more easily identify job opportunities and engage in commercial and social media activities. For example, new technology has recently been developed known as 'Mobile Captions Service' which enables individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who can use their voice while "seeing" what has been said on a wireless phone display as the conversation takes place. The service is similar to closed captioning on television or voice carry-over (VCO) services on a landline phone. This new technology is the wireless equivalent of CapTel service that was funded by this Commission several years ago for landline users.

Unfortunately, high-speed broadband networks are not always readily or reliably available. I understand that nearly fifteen percent of the overall population of Louisiana lacks access to high speed service. In addition, those who are lucky enough to have access at home, cannot always access wireless high-speed broadband networks when they are not at home, particularly if they are travelling in rural areas.

Expanding high speed wireless service would greatly help reduce accessibility problems experienced by those with hearing loss, who communicate using their own voice, particularly during natural disasters. This has been a constant and worrisome problem during the numerous hurricane evacuations Louisiana has experienced in recent years as well as other types of natural disasters that occur in various states. Expanded high speed wireless services, for us, would provide a way for those who use the "Mobile Caption Service", to alert family members and friends who need to evacuate immediately, make plans and help them to remain in contact with each other while in emergency shelters or other locations when away from their special land line phones located back at home. Expanded wireless services will open doors to those needing to find available lodging while traveling on unfamiliar evacuation routes.

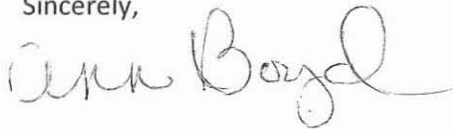
Needless to say, equal access to all, through expanded wireless services, will help improve the quality of life in both emergency and non-emergency situations such as car breakdowns and accidents. It will reduce exclusion problems that arise from the need to be at home simply to use their special devices to make plans for social events, improve caregivers assisting ill and elderly family members while away from home, help parents and children involved in school activities, employers and employees in business needs and assist in countless other ways in our lives.

According to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), people with disabilities typically have only half the rate of Internet access as others in the population. For those in the disabled community, this is a very serious issue, as made clear by FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps' statement that -- *"Access denied is opportunity denied."*

I support the AT&T/T-Mobile merger because it will expand access to high-speed wireless service to 97 percent of the population. Expanding broadband access will make a real difference in the lives of disabled Americans and ensure they have access to the same economic, educational, and social opportunities as all other Americans.

I respectfully ask you to support the AT&T/T-Mobile merger and thank you in advance for taking the time to listen to my views on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Boyd". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ann Boyd